



ON EL TORO

A VIEW FROM THE ARBOR

July 2007

A Community Newsletter from the Lake Forest Redevelopment Agency

Traffic Improvements Pave the Way for Revitalization

Now that the El Toro Road Traffic and Landscape Improvement project is complete, the community is reap-

ing the benefits. Property owners along El Toro Road are investing heavily, bringing exciting new restaurants, shops, and a new grocery store to the area. By relieving traffic and beautifying the sidewalks, parkways, and medians with landscaping and Craftsman-style architectural design, the

City has created an environment that is encouraging private investment and quality development.

continued on page 2



An Award-Winning Road Improvement Project

The improvements to El Toro Road have been recognized by agencies within the county, region and state for developing an exceptionally successful traffic relief and roadway beautification project.

1. CELSOC 2007 Award of Excellence "The Arbor on El Toro Road" – presented by Consulting Engineers and Land Surveyors of California, Orange County Chapter
2. APWA 2006 Project of the Year Award "EL Toro Road Traffic and Landscape Improvement" – presented by American Public Works Association, Southern California Chapter
3. ASCE Project Achievement Award "EL Toro Road Traffic and Landscape Improvement" – presented by American Society of Civil Engineers, Orange County Branch
4. OCEC Engineering Project Achievement Award "El Toro Road Traffic and Landscape Improvement – presented by Orange County Engineering Council
5. 2005 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence- Public Information Program for the El Toro Road Traffic & Landscape Improvement Project —presented by League of California Cities
6. TRANNY Award – presented by California Transportation Foundation for the category Highway/Community/Enhancement



Traffic Improvements Pave the Way for Revitalization *continued from page 1*

The City has won numerous awards for the way the El Toro Road project combines traffic relief with the aesthetic beauty of the landscaping and architecture (see accompanying article). The design of the Arbor on El Toro provides pedestrian access as well as significant traffic relief. This benefits the shops in the area, as customers spend more time walking through the shopping area and visiting the new stores and restaurants that have come to Lake Forest.

At the City's grand opening event, nearly 2,500 Lake Forest residents celebrated the completion of the El Toro Road Project and the arrival of the first phase of new shops and restaurants. More shops and bistros are opening every day. The area continues to improve, and other property owners have plans for renovating their shopping centers to keep up with the improvements that are happening all around them.

If you haven't been down to the Arbor on El Toro, you should see what you've been missing!



Restaurant's New Look Will Sizzle!

The Sizzler Restaurant, located in the Bell Tower Plaza shopping center, will undergo an "extreme makeover." Gone will be the white stucco, red tile roof and green awnings. In its place will be a Craftsman-style architecture that will reflect the style and color of the new shopping centers throughout the Arbor.

This will be more than just a face lift. The Sizzler will add more than 1,400 square feet of space to add more interior restaurant seating as well as new restrooms that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Sizzler's expansion and renovation is a true testimonial of its belief that the Arbor on El Toro has a bright future and is worthy of significant investment.



Construction is expected to begin in summer 2007.



Elevation of proposed project and future home of 5 new tenant suites.

Planting Seeds for New Shops at the Arbor

While many of the new shops and restaurants are bustling with activity in the Arbor District, there is

still plenty of room for more businesses. There is an 8,412 square-foot retail center planned for the vacant lot on the corner of Raymond and El Toro Road next to the Orchard at Saddleback.

This site was formerly the location of Quiznos, Panda-Panda, and Wendy's. The new shopping center will have five tenant suites. The architecture and land-

scaping will exhibit Craftsman architectural features, colors, and materials that will complement that of the adjacent "Orchard at Saddleback" and maintain design continuity. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2007.



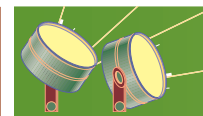
renovating the shops to provide a new color palette along with Craftsman-style architectural elements. In addition to painting the buildings, the center added new brick columns, Craftsman-style light fixtures, and a repaired and restriped parking lot with new landscaping.

The new and improved El Toro Square will continue to have Big 5 Sporting Goods as an anchor and has added several new tenants to the shopping center. New tenants include:

- Sonshine Christian Stores
 - Wine Pavillion
 - Outdoor Kitchen Concepts
 - California Patio
 - Banner Mattress
 - Olamendi's Mexican Grill
- (See business spotlight)

It's Hip to be in El Toro Square

Red Mountain Retail Group, the owner of El Toro Square shopping center, is



Business in the Spotlight



Sergio and Patricia Olamendi hope to open for business later this fall

Olamendi's Mexican Grill

What began as Christina Olamendi's secret family recipe for various Mexican dishes has become an ever expanding restaurant chain throughout South Orange County, soon to include Lake Forest. Olamendi's Mexican Grill will open its fifth restaurant later this fall in the newly revitalized El Toro Square at Swartz Drive and El Toro Road.

The City's redevelopment efforts along El Toro Road were a key factor in the decision to locate the newest Olamendi's restaurant in Lake Forest. "The City has put in a

good effort to remodel this area," said Sergio Olamendi, who will be the manager of the establishment. "The location is perfect, and with the improvements the city has done to El Toro Road, we can't wait to open our new restaurant here in Lake Forest."

The success of this family operated business is truly built on family recipes. Favorite dishes at Olamendi's range from Sergio's specialty – shrimp in a chipotle sauce that he makes personally – to the mole poblano with chicken. The restaurant's most famous cuisine is Pescado a la Veracruz, a red snapper that President Nixon ordered every time he dined at Olamendi's restaurant in San Clemente.

2004



Artist Rendering of
The Orchard at Saddleback—2004

The Orchard brings *Style* to Lake Forest

In 2004, the shopping center known as Saddleback Valley Plaza was saddled with dated architecture and vacant storefronts. The congested traffic on El Toro Road only exacerbated the problem.

So, when the groundbreaking celebration for a new and updated shopping center was held in 2005, many looked

on with anticipation to an updated center that would provide great dining, distinct shops, and an inviting atmosphere.

When the City began its revitalization of El Toro Road, the private sector responded as well and invested heavily in the turn around of the shopping center. The developer, Westrust/Apollo, invested more than \$80 million in completely reconstructing the center.



2007



The Orchard at Saddleback—2007

Now known as “The Orchard at Saddleback,” shoppers enjoy a 279,000 square foot revitalized shopping center that has everything from Johnny Rockets and Jamba Juice to Casual Male and Shoe Pavilion.

The Orchard was designed to be a pedestrian-friendly plaza that is home to several unique shops and restaurants including Just Because, Killer Dana Surfwear Shop, and Lucille’s Smokehouse Barbeque.

The Orchard continues to blossom with new stores and restaurants!

Bonehead’s, Carino’s Italian Restaurant, and Ralph’s Grocery store have now opened in the Orchard’s final phase.

The Orchard at Saddleback is the perfect place to shop, relax, or simply stroll along the walkways and meet your neighbors. But bring your appetite! You’ll want to sample the wide varieties of international cuisine available at the Orchard.

Visit “What’s New” at www.thearbor.info for a complete list of restaurants and shops.

Home Improvement and More

The vision for the Arbor on El Toro was further realized with the opening of The Home Depot this past November. Consisting of 150,000 square feet of retail space, Home Depot provides Lake Forest residents with a convenient shopping location and pleasant environment to satisfy all their home improvement needs.

Home Depot was very responsive to the City's desire to display the Craftsman-style architecture to maintain and enhance the Arbor theme. The Buchheim family, which owns the 15-acre site, also incorporated Craftsman-style architecture in their design of the new office and retail shops adjacent to Home Depot.

Construction of the office/retail shops fronting El Toro Road is almost complete. Several of the businesses which were there prior to the development are now returning. El Toro Beauty Supply, Watch Tech, Mr. Wok, Rite

Price Pharmacy, and Baskin Robbins are all coming back to the improved site.

The site will be home to a few new tenants as well including Wachovia Bank and Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf.

